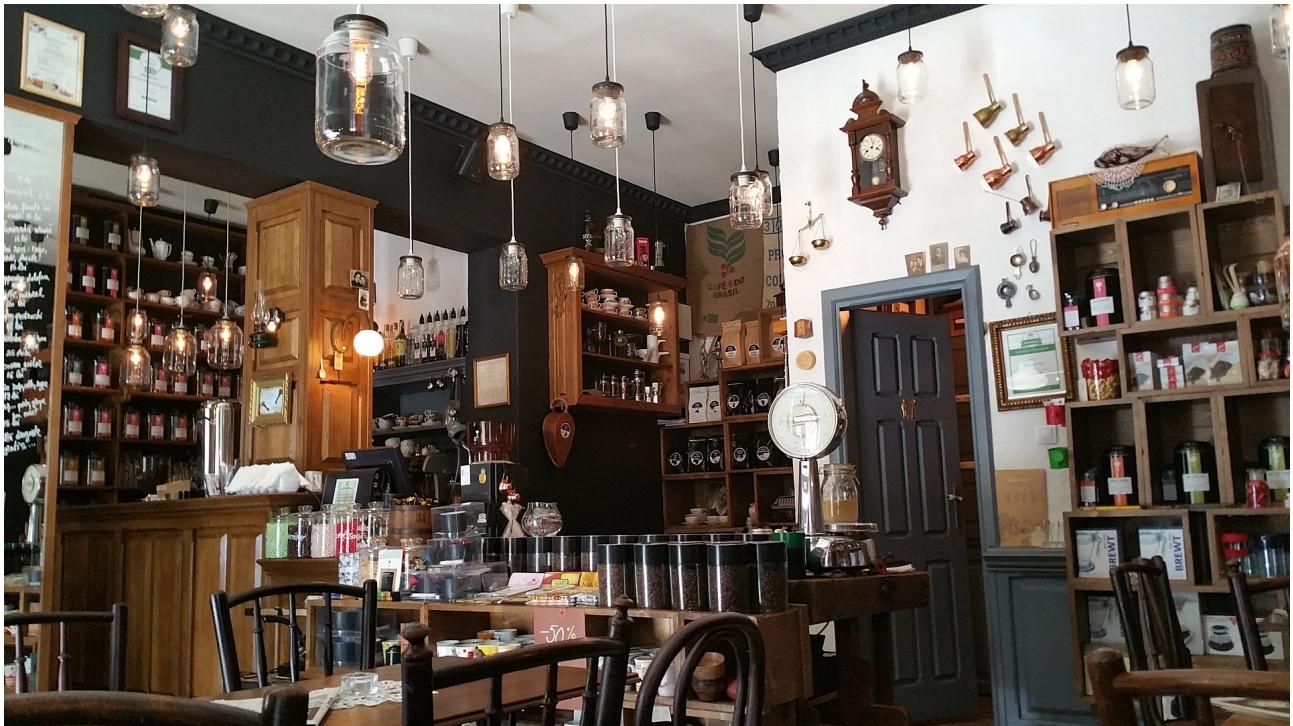


Blog



Least

Are you concerned about the least?

When Mother Teresa saw the children of Calcutta, she saw Christ. “I see Jesus in every human being. I say to myself, this is hungry Jesus, I must feed him. This is sick Jesus. This one has leprosy or gangrene; I must wash him and tend to him. I serve because I love Jesus.” She went on to say, “O beloved sick, how doubly dear you are to me, when you personify Christ; and what a privilege is mine to be allowed to tend you.” (Mother Teresa)

How we treat people matters. How we treat those who might be regarded as the least in society matters. A distinguishing mark of authentic Christian Faith is that we don’t just help nice people. “If you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to

you? Even sinners do that." (Luke 6:33) We are concerned about the least. We care about those in need who are overlooked, dismissed or rejected by everyone else.

Concerning those in greatest need, Jesus told a parable in which said the following,

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" (Matthew 25:37-40)

In this parable the sheep and goats were identified by their treatment of the least. "The best test of a nation's righteousness is how it treats the poorest and most vulnerable in its midst." (Jim Wallis) Here are a few thoughts for consideration.

See the least, see Christ

"When did we see you?"

When we see the least, we see Christ. Those who fed the hungry, clothed the poor, visited prisoners and nursed the sick didn't appreciate who they were helping. Those who overlooked the needy couldn't have guessed who they were ignoring. We are to treat every person as if it were Christ himself. People created in the image of God should be treated with the dignity that merits, regardless of their economic or social condition. When we see the least, we see Christ.

Serve the least, serve Christ

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

When we serve the least, we serve Christ. Simon the Pharisee was rebuked for not treating Jesus appropriately during dinner at his house. Yet the woman of dubious reputation was praised for pouring out her love and worship on him. (Luke 7) As servants of Christ we are required to offer the same degree of attention and care to the least. While religious people passed by a needy man lying in the road, the good Samaritan served him. (Luke 10) Treat the least as we would treat Jesus. When we serve the least, we serve Christ.

Shun the least, shun Christ

“Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.”

When we shun the least, we shun Christ. James the apostle chastised the church in his day because they favoured wealthy and influential individuals while seeking to hide the least out of sight. “You have dishonoured the poor man,” he says (James 2:6). Every culture has its way of shunning the least. The kingdom of Christ has different values. The church is not a museum of saint, but a hospital for sinners. When we shun the least, we shun Christ.

In 1664 Samuel Crossman wrote the words to a beautiful song, “My song is love unknown, my Saviour's love to me; love to the loveless shown, that they might lovely be.” William Booth said, “I must go, not only to those who need me, but to those who need me most.” That is when the least become the most. When we see the least, we see Christ. When we serve the least, we serve Christ. When we shun the least, we shun Christ. “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”